

REMARKS:

I. Introduction

In an Office Action mailed on October 29, 2007, the Examiner rejected claims 1 to 20. The present amendment cancels claims 2, 4, 9, 16 and 17, amends claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 10, 11, 13, and 19, and adds new claims 21 to 24. Accordingly, claims 1, 3, 5 to 8, 10 to 15 and 18 to 24 are now pending in this application.

II. Objections to the Drawings

The examiner objected to the drawings under 37 CFR 1.83(a) as not showing every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Claim 9 has been cancelled. Claims 5 and 17 have been amended so that the hooks are on the coaster and the openings are on the pots. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection is requested.

III. Objections to the Claims

The examiner objected to claims 2 and 4 because the limitation "the guide face" had insufficient antecedent basis. Claims 2 and 4 have been cancelled. The examiner objected to claim 13 because the limitation "the spacer" had insufficient antecedent basis. Claim 13 has been amended to depend from claim 12. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection is requested.

IV. Claim Rejections Pursuant to 35 U.S.C 112

The Examiner rejected claims 1 to 20 pursuant to 35 U.S.C 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The examiner stated that claim 1 recites the limitation "undetectably attached" while the specification describes the connection as "detachable but secure".. Claim 1 has been amended to change "undetectably" to "detachably". The examiner also stated that the wording of claims 5 and 17 is confusing. Claims 5 and 17 have been amended to claim hooks on the coaster and openings on the pot. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

V. Claim Rejections Pursuant to 35 U.S.C 103

(a) The Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 17, and 18 pursuant to 35 U.S.C 103(a) as unpatentable over **Mickelson** (US 3,949,524).

Mickelson discloses a planter having an enclosure (11) and a tray (21) attached to the bottom of the enclosure (11). The tray (21) has a projection (22) that is a truncated cone and

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extends through a hole (17) in the bottom panel (16) of the (enclosure). The tray (21) also has a plurality of projections (20) that snap-lock into openings (18) of the enclosure (11) to secure the tray to the enclosure (11). To attach the tray (21) to the bottom of the enclosure (11), the tray projection (22) is through the enclosure bottom panel hole (17) with enough force to deflect the projections (20) radially outwardly to pass over the bottom edge of the enclosure. When the projections (20) reach the openings (18), the projections (20) resiliently snap into the openings (20) to secure the tray (21) to the enclosure (11). If the protrusions (20) are not circumferentially aligned with the openings (18) the tray is rotated relative to the enclosure until the protrusions (20) are not circumferentially aligned with the openings (18) and the projections (20) resiliently snap into the openings (20) to secure the tray (21) to the enclosure (11). In an axial snap-lock connection such as this, rotational movement is not required for engagement or disengagement of the connection. Only an axial force is required to engage and disengage the connection. Rotational movement has only an auxiliary function in helping to find the correct position for the connection when not properly aligned.

In contrast, the present invention has coupling elements (11, 15) that form a bayonet-type coupling connection so that the coaster (2) and the pot (1) are attached via rotational movement. In a bayonet-type coupling connection, rotational movement is required in order to engage and disengage the connection. In an axial snap-lock connection such as that disclosed by Mickelson, axial pressure created by plant roots extending into the holes and onto the coaster can push the coaster off. A bayonet-type connection ensures that this does not happen because it requires rotational movement to engage and disengage the connection. A bayonet-type connection engages the connection at a right angle to the pressure. Also, a bayonet-type connection requires relatively low engagement and disengagement forces relative to the snap-lock connection. Also in the present invention, a dome (8) of the pot (1) and a dome (14) of the coaster (2) have abutting guide surfaces (9, 16) tapering in conical shape so that the coaster (2) and the pot (1) are mutually engaged via the guide surfaces (9, 16). The abutting guide surfaces permit uniform guidance contact over the entire area so that the coaster and pot are rotationally aligned about a central axis so that the coupling connection can be established by a mutual twisting of the parts. In a connection such as that disclosed by Mickelson, the protrusion (22) engages only the thickness of the bottom panel (16) within the hole (17). Thus, the protrusion (22) does not necessarily rotationally align the components because the tray (21) can tilt relative to the enclosure (11). In fact, this can ease installation of the snap-lock connection

because the tilting between the parts can enable the protrusions (20) to be deflected in succession rather than simultaneously.

Independent claim 1, and claims dependent therefrom, are allowable because they each require "wherein the dome (8) of the pot (1) and the dome (14) of the coaster (2) have abutting guide surfaces (9, 16) tapering in conical shape", "wherein the coaster (2) and the pot (1) are mutually engaged via the guide surfaces (9, 16)", and "wherein the coupling elements (11, 15) form a bayonet-type coupling connection so that the coaster (2) and the pot (1) are attached via rotational movement." No prior art of record discloses or reasonably suggests the present invention as now claimed by independent claim 1. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

(b) The Examiner rejected claims 3 to 7, 16, 19 and 20 pursuant to 35 U.S.C 103(a) as unpatentable over **Mickelson** (US 3,949,524) in view of **Grigi** (EP 0 842 599).

Claims 3 to 7, 16, 19 and 20 are allowable as depending from allowable independent claim 1 as discussed above and also independently allowable for novel and nonobvious matter therein. It is noted that Grigi does not make up for the deficiencies of Mickelson. For example, Grigi has a snap-lock connection (24) rather than a bayonet-type coupling connection and does not have abutting guide surfaces tapering in conical shape. Grigi discloses having coaster with a cylindrically-shaped tube (18) that extends into a conical-shaped protrusion of the pot to form an air passage through the coaster and into the pot. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

(c) The Examiner rejected claims 8 to 12 pursuant to 35 U.S.C 103(a) as unpatentable over **Mickelson** (US 3,949,524) in view of **Grigi** (EP 0 842 599) and further in view of **Wells** (US 1,391,353).

Claims 8 to 12 are allowable as depending from allowable independent claim 1 as discussed above and also independently allowable for novel and nonobvious matter therein. It is noted that Wells does not make up for the deficiencies of Mickelson and Grigi. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

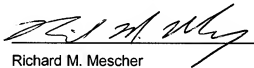
(d) The Examiner rejected claims 13 to 15 pursuant to 35 U.S.C 103(a) as unpatentable over **Mickelson** (US 3,949,524) in view of **Grigi** (EP 0 842 599) and further in view of **Wells** (US 1,391,353) and further in view of **Kay** (US 4,315,382).

Claims 13 to 15 are allowable as depending from allowable independent claim 1 as discussed above and also independently allowable for novel and nonobvious matter therein. It is noted that Wells does not make up for the deficiencies of Mickelson, Grigi and Wells. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

VI. Conclusion

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is found that that the present amendment does not place the application in a condition for allowance, Applicant's undersigned attorney requests that the Examiner initiate a telephone interview to expedite prosecution of the application. If there are any fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 50-3915.

Respectfully submitted,



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